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Security and privacy concerns hinder online shopping

A national survey commissioned by **Symantec Corp.** and conducted by **Decima Research Inc.** finds that only 24% of Canadians plan to shop online this holiday season and 62% of regular Internet shoppers have curtailed their online purchases. This, along with the fact that 49% of all Canadians fear their credit card information may be stolen while they shop online, should be cause for concern by online merchants. In a press release, Symantec's director of consumer solutions Lynn Hargrove said consumers can take precautions to protect themselves while they shop online: "Consumers need a transaction security solution, such as Norton Confidential, which provides both phishing and crimeware protection. . . . They should also have the latest antivirus software and firewalls installed, as well as the most up-to-date patches to ensure their software applications and operating system are secure."

Lingo to launch kindergarten English program

Toronto-based **Lingo Media Inc.**, a publisher of English language learning programs in China, has announced plans to launch Lingo Kindergarten English, a new educational program aimed at China's vast preschool market. According to the **Chinese State Ministry of Education**, China's kindergarten market of three to six year old children is currently 21 million and growing. "Lingo Kindergarten English is part of our growth strategy to develop new programs to increase our long-term royalty income from China," said Michael Kraft, Lingo's president and CEO, in a press release.

Nstein, Transcontinental sign deal

Nstein Technologies Inc., a multilingual text mining and information access solutions provider based in Montreal, has signed a contract with **Transcontinental Media**. The deal involves the deployment of Nstein's Ntelligent Content Mangement (NCM) Suite so Transcontinental can optimize the publication and administration of more than 20 online information portals. NCM makes online searches easier and faster using a series of semantic analysis tools. "NCM Suite is one of the most comprehensive and innovative solutions on the market," said Zouhaire Sekkat, VP of digital media at Transcontinental. "It will help us maximize the value of our product by providing more content more quickly to our users and to better serve their research related needs."

Books meet viral video in Raincoast/Pocket Cine partnership

One of the oldest forms of media is drawing on one of the newest in a bid to publicize a contest based on a popular series of tongue-in-cheek survival guides.

Vancouver publisher and distributor **Raincoast Books** has tapped New Westminister BC-based **Pocket Cine Inc.**, another publisher and distributor – in this case, of mobile video – to help with a competition to see who can create the best viral video in the spirit of the *Worst-Case Scenario Handbooks*, a series of how-to-survive-anything guides published by San Francisco's **Chronicle Books** and distributed here by Raincoast.

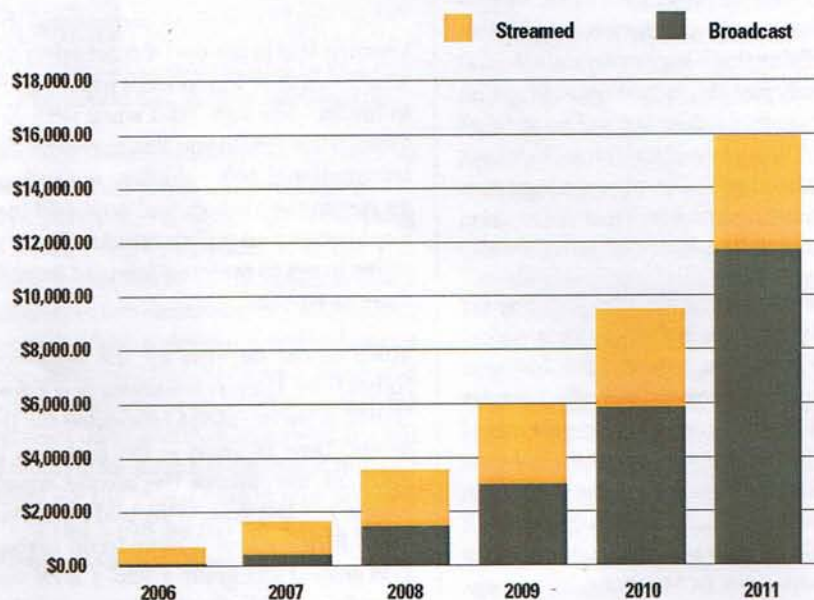
"There's so much bad and dark news about impending disaster in the world," says Philip Shaddock, the man behind Pocket Cine and the self-described "Johnny Appleseed" of mobile viral video in Canada. "This is kind of comic relief that takes really ridiculous

situations like jumping off a train and has some fun with them."

Billed as "survival guides for the worst life has to offer," the series of books features light-hearted, not-too-serious tips for coping with situations ranging from the awkward (*The Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook: Dating and Sex's* "How To Fend Off Competition for Your Date") to the life-threatening ("How To Fend Off a Shark Attack," found in the original *Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook*).

The contest kicked off on November 13 and will run through January 31, 2007. During each of those 12 weeks, Raincoast will promote a different title in the *Worst-Case Scenario Handbook* series, which runs the gamut from fairly mundane situations such as dating, work and parenting to the exotic, such as travel and survival. "It can basically be any video – it doesn't have to be animated," adds Monique Trotter, Internet marketing manager at Raincoast,

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Total Revenues for Streamed and Broadcast Mobile TV Services, 2006-11 (\$m)

Source: Juniper Research

Raincoast/Pocket Cine — Continued from page 4

of the eligibility requirements. “The film will be any type of film that you could take with your cell phone camera, your digital camera, your handheld camcorder — it doesn’t really matter.”

Raincoast and PocketCine will convert all entries to the MPEG-4 format, which allows for portability and viewing across nearly all platforms including mobile phones, video iPods and similar media devices. All the videos will be available as downloads rather than streaming media, and will be seeded throughout the Web in venues that lend themselves to viral video marketing, such as **YouTube** and various blogs. Raincoast is also promoting the competition at 92 bricks-and-mortar book retailers across the country.

While it’s ostensibly a mobile video competition, Trotter says Raincoast is mindful that video-capable cell phone penetration is still in the single-digits in Canada. “There [are] the people who will have the video-capable phone and the data plan that will allow them to download it, and then there are the people who will basically watch it online and share it via email,” she explains. “We’re trying to accommodate those two different sides; of course, the mobile side is what we’re interested in experimenting with, but that audience will likely be smaller.”

To get the ball rolling, Shaddock commissioned a viral video from an independent BC animator, who came back with a piece titled “How to Jump From a Window into a Dumpster” that immediately won Shaddock over. “I thought that was the funniest idea in the world,” he says. “Hopefully someday I won’t need to do that, but if I do I’ll have some idea of how to do it.” The video, along with several other samples, can be seen at the contest’s home page at <http://www.raincoast.com/worstcase/>.

Originally a developer of interactive content such as games through his company Rage Pictures Inc., Shaddock turned to working with mobile video after **University of British Columbia professor and MobileMuse.ca** executive director David Vogt convinced him of its potential. “I discovered that there’s very little awareness amongst artists of this medium,” he

says. “They’re intrigued by it and they’re interested by it, but they really don’t know where they can put their foot into it, and once they get into it they really don’t know what technical issues there are in dealing with it, and what the creative possibilities are in terms of short-format.”

“This is kind of comic relief that takes really ridiculous situations like jumping off a train and has some fun with them.”

— Philip Shaddock, Pocket Cine

To help bridge the divide between mobile media technology and the artistic community, Shaddock set up Pocket Cine as a clearinghouse for information on porting content to cell phones and other similar devices. The site led him to work with Trotter and Raincoast, which has in turn brought other artists to his door to learn more about the mobile medium. “The whole connection to Raincoast allows me to reach a lot of artists that I wouldn’t be able to otherwise, and to generate awareness and invite them to experiment with this medium,” he says.

While it’s admittedly early days for mobile video as a medium, Shaddock is confident that the portability and ubiquity of mobile phones coupled with old-fashioned storytelling will mean the multitudes watching video on the “third screen” will soon grow exponentially. “It’s something that somebody throws into their pocket when they leave their house, and it’s something they share spontaneously with friends,” he says. “It’s one or two buttons to press and it takes advantage of the habit that people have of watching TV, which is passive, and because the medium supports narrative, and because it has sound and music and all that stuff — it has emotion.” ■

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VIQ picks up \$9.3 million contract down under

Markham-ON based **VIQ Solutions Inc.**, a global provider of digital audio products and solutions for voice-driven systems in legal, medical, business and government industries, has announced that its wholly-owned Australian subsidiary **Spark & Cannon Australasia Pty Ltd.** has been awarded a contract by the **Western Australia Department of the Attorney General** for the provision of court recording and transcription services. The three-year contract has an estimated annual value of AU\$3.1 million. “As the leaders in efficient transcriptions services in Australia, we are confident we will supply the [Department of the Attorney General] with the highest level of quality court recording and transcription services,” said Gregory Farmer, GM of Spark & Cannon, in a press release.

Canadians more likely to visit online classifieds: comScore

According to Internet research firm **comScore**, seven million Canadians visited a classifieds website in September, up 57% from a year earlier, and one third of online Canadians visit a classifieds website every month — significantly outpacing the US where only 22% of online Americans visit a classifieds site every month. Free local classifieds website **Kijiji.ca** has led this growth by becoming Canada’s largest online classifieds site, with 1.5 million visitors every month, less than a year after launching. A different study from **eMarketer** gives some clarity to the comScore findings. It reveals that 81% of Canadians shop or browse for goods online, but only 56% actually make online purchases. Those numbers in the US are 78% and 66% respectively, showing that while Canadians like to look for goods online, they prefer to make purchases in person, which online classifieds enable them to do.